

## ASEAN Day Message

**H.E. Deputy Prime Minister SOK Chenda Sophea, Minister of  
Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Kingdom of Cambodia**

**8 August 2024**

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1. Today marks an auspicious moment for all Southeast Asian citizens as we commemorate the 57th anniversary of ASEAN. For almost six decades, ASEAN has worked diligently to make sure that its centrality and unity are preserved and strengthened.
2. Centrality is the driving force behind our substantive dialogue and cooperation with external partners to maintain peace, stability, and prosperity in Southeast Asia. It reflects the ASEAN commitment for a region that's economically vibrant, socially just, and culturally interconnected.
3. ASEAN stands as a model of regional cooperation and solidarity on the international stage. Together, we've built a thriving community that champions shared values and mutual interests while addressing common challenges. One of our key strengths is our commitment to solidarity among members. Through dialogue, diplomacy, and mutual respect, ASEAN Member States have worked hand-in-hand to create a harmonious environment – for stability, economic growth, and social development.
4. Unity in Diversity is another strength that contributes to our resilience. We are proud of our remarkable diversity of cultures,

traditions, languages, and histories – a source of strength and creativity for our region.

5. Of course, there are differences among us, sometimes even disagreements, how could there not be given our diversity? The virtue of ASEAN is not to erase our differences; it is to help us see past them, work through them and move beyond them.
6. Cambodia has been a steadfast member of ASEAN since 1999, contributing significantly to regional cooperation and integration. We've helped nurture its values and guiding principles – including independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference, consensus-based decision making, and peaceful settlement of disputes. These principles promote a region that flourishes with peace and opportunity. Over the past two and a half decades, Cambodia has successfully held the rotating Chair of ASEAN three times – in 2002, 2012 and 2022. Cambodia is committed to harnessing the spirit of togetherness. We will uphold and promote ASEAN unity, centrality, and solidarity to address common challenges – and enhance our contribution to regional and global peace, stability, security, and sustainable development.
7. Cambodia has played a crucial role in advancing ASEAN's external partnerships. The Royal Government has made significant efforts to enhance and expand ties with dialogue and sectoral dialogue partners. We recently concluded our role as country coordinator for ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Relations for three years. We've now assumed the role as coordinator for ASEAN-US Dialogue Relations from 2024 to 2027. With this new responsibility, Cambodia is committed to bolstering ASEAN's centrality and regional integration. We'll collaborate

closely with all stakeholders to effectively fulfill this role, contributing to our collective efforts in community-building and regional stability.

8. Amid escalating geopolitical rivalries, ASEAN's increasingly central role and relevance as a beacon for friendly relation and mutually beneficial cooperation are clearly reflected by the growing interests from non-regional countries to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC). To navigate this landscape effectively, we must show our capacity to innovate and adapt while preserving our unity and centrality. By upholding core values, enhancing regional cooperation, and forging robust partnerships with external stakeholders, ASEAN will be able to address challenges and seize opportunities to foster peace, stability, and prosperity – for all members and the wider region.
9. On this ASEAN Day, let's celebrate the incredible progress we've made together over the decades. As we raise the ASEAN flag high, let it be a symbol of our shared pride and unity. The future holds many challenges. But I have no doubt that the ASEAN's spirit of cooperation and resilience will see us through. Together, we can bring about peace, stability, and prosperity in the region for our peoples' well-being.

Happy ASEAN Day!

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